

Security 'Leaks' Debated

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In England, the British intelligence service operates under a cloak of complete immunity from investigation.

It scores its successes, and little ever is known about them.

It makes mistakes, but the mistakes are not necessarily dragged into public view so that the spectacle may be re-

viewed, tasted, rolled on the tongue, and rehashed in all its sorry detail.

A primary reason for the British approach is that the intelligence community does not want valuable security knowledge of its security operations being scattered throughout the countryside for foreign agents to pick up and collate with less effort than it would take to obtain a French chef's secret recipes.

'Leaks' Exploited

In the United States, the procedure is quite different, as the general public is beginning to learn. Not only is Congress exerting its prerogative of raising questions about whether there should not be a "constant review of our intelligence operations," but "leaks" of numerous kinds of intelligence information are coming from civilians in Atlanta, in Oklahoma, in New York City, and the "leaks," in turn, are being exploited to the full by some congressmen who insist that the American people "have the right to know."

Admittedly, the public does have the right to know, but it is being pointed out in private by responsible intelligence officials that when such knowledge begins to intrude disastrously into the lives of families of Cuban underground agents gathering valuable information for the United States, and when future world operations of the Central Intelligence Agency can be endangered by too-public discussions, then questions of limits and restraints come into play.

Questions Posed

In this intelligence dilemma of how much information the general public should be allowed to have, and how much damage could be wreaked by intelligence slips, questions are being posed this way now:

Couldn't more of the British procedure of respect and trust in the intelligence community be instilled in the United States?

Why is there such a difference in operating procedure in two countries stemming from the same democratic and philosophical traditions?

Concern Felt

Why, some ask, should CIA have been involved in the Bay of Pigs fiasco of April, 1961, as certain "leaks" would indicate?

The difference would seem to lie, in the view of some observers and intelligence officers who have discussed this frequently, in the American penchant not only to correct mistakes in order to attain a

higher efficiency, which is an admirable quality, but also to correct the mistakes in full public view so that all may know that the mistakes are being corrected.

It is this latter American penchant — the desire publicly to correct the mistakes and in the process to strew the landscape with intelligence secrets — that is beginning to cause deep concern in many opinion quarters, even though it is recognized that if the intelligence community makes mistakes it must be held responsible for them and its methodology rectified.

The "intelligence" pendulum is beginning to swing the other way now.

Rep. George H. Mahon (D) of Texas told the House of Representatives in Washington on Thursday that excessive talk about United States intelligence secrets is "making us the laughing stock of the world."